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ABSTRACT

Multiple accreditation of individual institutions can involve serious duplication of efforts by accreditation agencies. Four examples of guidelines and procedures for cooperative accreditation are given: those of (1) the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the Association of Theological Schools (a coordinating agreement with another accrediting agency); (2) The Association of Theological Schools and the New England Association Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (procedures for joint evaluations); (3) the American Home Economics Association/Foundation for Interior Design Education Research and the American Dietetic Association (mechanisms for exchanging information and scheduling joint site visits); and (4) the Council on Education for Public Health and the Accrediting for Health Services Administration Commission on Education (joint evaluation team visits). Guidelines developed by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation's Task Force on Interagency Cooperation are also included. Suggested readings and a list of task force members are appended. (MSE)

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A Guide to Interagency Cooperation

Including Models of Successful Interagency Cooperative Efforts

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The Council On Postsecondary Accreditation

COPA

TO: INSTITUTIONAL PRESIDENTS

FROM: COPA

In March 1977, the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation organized a task force on interagency cooperation to explore the problem of proliferation of accrediting agencies and the resultant burden placed on institutions to respond to myriad criteria and to prepare a number of fairly identical reports to accommodate each visiting evaluation team.

Two nationwide surveys were undertaken by the Task Force, one of the accrediting bodies that are COPA members and the other of the 593 accredited institutions that are accredited by two or more agencies, to determine their opinions about accreditation and interagency cooperation. The results of both surveys revealed that an overwhelming majority of institutional presidents and agency heads were in favor of participation in cooperative accreditation activities and that those who had experienced one or more cooperative accrediting activities would be willing to participate in future joint arrangements.

Such cooperative venture present challenges to all involved. Still, if the spirit of cooperation is present and the mutual support on the part of the institution and the agency involved is freely offered, a positive and beneficial experience can result.

Reports from individual agencies that have participated in joint ventures have stressed that "coordination begins with the institution and with the designation of responsibility within the institution for liaison with the various accrediting agencies."

This is where you, the institutional president, must play a paramount role. To be successful, coordination requires advanced planning by strong leadership within the institution to insure that this spirit is not lost in a morass of paperwork nor squandered on a wasteful expense of time and money.

Cooperation between agencies can be advantageous to your institution by dispelling myths pertaining to accreditation, by resolving agency and institution "turf" problems, and by promoting the use of a common data base and the sharing of some common priorities. These benefits can not be realized, however, without your determined and sincere commitment to cooperation and quality education. This booklet will show you how interagency cooperation can work for you.

Introduction

One of the most critical problems facing postsecondary educational institutions today is the continuous struggle to maintain and improve the quality of their educational offerings, while facing a vast and often contradictory web of external pressures: competition for students, over-regulation, runaway costs, and demands for accountability from accrediting bodies, to name a few.

Not the least of these external pressures is the formidable demands placed on institutions by accrediting bodies. Although accreditation is voluntary, few reputable institutions can flourish without it. One of the most critical issues surfacing in accreditation today is the ability of the accrediting community to remain responsive and flexible to evolving educational formats, increasing specialization within disciplines, and the demands by the professions for greater recognition of their specialties. Also, the accrediting community has itself become more specialized, and the number of accrediting agencies has mushroomed. This has produced an inevitable duplication of efforts.

Agencies ask for multiple reports seeking commonly-used information. There is a confusion as to accreditation terms. There is a growing concern about the expense of preparing to undergo visits from five or six accrediting bodies on the campus in one year. The institution heads are justifiably seeking relief from the growing burdens of multiple accreditation. The murmur for reform will, without remedial action, become a hue and cry.

There needs to be, as Professor H. R. Kells concluded, a "focus of discussion about common terms, data needs and training efforts as well as joint or concurrent self-study and evaluation team efforts. . ."

Under the leadership of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, the accrediting community has agreed that cooperation is a desirable goal and that sincere, continuing efforts toward cooperation are essential if accreditation's position as a positive force is to be enhanced in advancing quality education. Also, given the large and inevitable cost that institutions will continue to bear in the pursuit of accreditation, they are well advised carefully to reconsider how best to use what accreditation has to offer.

The examples of cooperative arrangements are presented to indicate the benefits that can result from coordinated accreditation reviews and to serve as guides to facilitate cooperation between and among institutional and programmatic accrediting agencies:

1. Various independent organizations have come together to sponsor a single accrediting mechanism, such as the American Medical Association, the Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and the Engineers' Council for Professional Development.

2. For many years, the regional postsecondary commissions have shared information and cooperated on common problems.

3. Several of the national specialized institutional accrediting agencies (the Association of Independent Colleges and Schools, the National Association of Trade and Technical Schools, and the National Home Study Council) have agreed on ways jointly to accredit institutions with programs falling under the purview of their separate agencies.

4. The American Association of Bible Colleges and the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada separately have worked out arrangements with the regional commissions, dealing with the accreditation of free-standing institutions desiring both forms of accreditation.

5. The regional commissions for many years have worked cooperatively with the major professional association to coordinate site visits, where institutions have so requested.

6. The American Dietetic Association, the American Home Economics Association, and the Foundation for Interior Design Education Research have a current effort underway intended to coordinate their accrediting activities in a variety of ways.

7. The Accrediting Commission on Education for Health Services Administration and the Council on Education for Public Health have jointly sponsored a number of campus visits.

From the samples presented on the following pages, it appears that those who have established cooperative arrangements reported successful and worthwhile accomplishments and expressed willingness to undertake such activities again. The spirit of cooperation and mutual support on the part of those involved were considered very important features in making the efforts so successful.

The remainder of this guide elaborates on these successful examples of cooperative efforts, presents the guidelines that were approved by the COPA Board for undertaking such efforts, acknowledges the work of those who are responsible for drafting the guidelines, and offers a selected bibliography of additional readings on the topics of interagency cooperation which formed the framework for the ideas presented here.

Why Interagency Cooperation?

For Institutions—Cooperation between and among accrediting agencies can be advantageous to your institution by saving duplication of effort in preparing self-study reports and in meeting with multiple site-visit teams.

For Accrediting Agencies—More cooperation between agencies may assist in resolving "turf" problems and may assist agencies in undertaking a more uniform and organized approach to the process.

For the General Public—Interagency cooperation can dispell some of the myths pertaining to accreditation and help promote the purpose of improving educational quality as one of the primary benefits of the process.

For Accreditation—Coordinated visits, standards, and guidelines can promote the use of a common data base and the sharing of some common priorities thus clearing the way for improved and more comprehensive evaluations of educational outcomes.

Models of Interagency Cooperation

COORDINATING AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER ACCREDITING AGENCIES

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the Association of Theological Schools

Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada

1. In all cases in which accreditation by both ATS and WASC is desired:
   a. For preaccreditation, initial accreditation, and reevaluation, decisions will be made by the respective agencies on the basis of a visit by a team representing both agencies.
   b. All visits to an institution regarding accreditation matters shall be arranged by the coordinating agency and assisted by the cooperating agency.
      - ☐ In all institutions which contain a theological school as an integral part of a college or university, WASC shall be the coordinating agency, ATS the cooperating agency.
      - ☐ In those theological schools which are free-standing (not part of a college or university), ATS shall be the coordinating agency, WASC the cooperating agency.
      - ☐ In those institutions containing programs other than graduate professional education in theology, the institution itself shall select the coordinating agency.
   c. The visiting team enlisted by the coordinating agency will include one or two representatives of the cooperating agency, depending on the complexity of the school's program.
   d. Initial action regarding preaccreditation, initial accreditation, or reevaluation shall be taken by the coordinating agency and that action communicated to the cooperating agency for its action.
   e. WASC and ATS will both list theological seminaries according to their usual practice.
   f. All accrediting costs to a school will be billed by and paid to the coordinating agency with that agency compensating the members of the team for their expenses.
   g. The coordinating agency will send to each team member a copy of their agreement and a cover letter explaining operational procedures.

h. When WASC is the coordinating agency, ATS will forego the accreditation fee, and when ATS is the coordinating agency, the institution will pay only the expenses of the WASC representatives. In either case, the institution will pay annual fees on the basis of enrollment.

2. WASC agrees that it will not consider any free-standing theological school of any level of accreditation without prior consultation with ATS.
3. ATS agrees not to consider any theological school which is a part of a college or university in the region of WASC for any accredited standing without prior consultation with WASC.

PROCEDURES FOR JOINT EVALUATIONS

The Association of Theological Schools and The New England Association Commission on Institutions of Higher Education

In an effort to serve their members better by eliminating duplicative procedures and by providing more effective evaluation and counselling services, the New England Association's Commission on Institutions of Higher Education and the Association of Theological Schools have for the past few years been developing procedures for joint evaluation of institutions eligible for accreditation by both. Joint evaluation is offered as an option for institutions, not mandated as a necessity.

Joint evaluation makes possible the preparation of a single institutional self-study document, and appointment by the two accrediting agencies of a single evaluation team, the scheduling of a single visit, and the writing of a single evaluation report to the institution.

These arrangements do not lead to joint accreditation, although it is expected that in most cases accreditation decisions will be the same. Separate accreditation action is taken by each agency; and, given the differences between the two agencies, dissimilar results could issue from a joint evaluation.

I. ARRANGING FOR JOINT EVALUATIONS

The decision to seek joint evaluation is entirely the institution's, and the president must take the initiative in contacting both accrediting agencies. The following approaches might be used, as appropriate:

1) An institution accredited by neither ATS nor NEASC is encouraged to contact both agencies simultaneously. NEASC and ATS will work cooperatively in considering the request, arranging for joint visits of a staff member and/or consultants from each association. The procedures established in each association for gaining candidacy or preaccreditation status will then be followed, each association requesting

such written reports or documentation as its normal procedures require and making its own decision about accepting the institution's application.

2) An institution accredited by one association and seeking status with the other notifies both NEASC and ATS of this interest, then follows the normal candidacy procedures with the appropriate agency.
3) An institution accredited by both associations, and seeking reaffirmation, should indicate to both its desire for joint evaluation. Staff members will then seek to integrate their reevaluation schedules for the institution as quickly as possible, postponding or advancing their next projected visit in order to achieve a synchronized schedule.

Both ATS and NEASC accredit institutions as a whole, but ATS also evaluates each degree program. Hence, ATS may be more frequently involved in accrediting relationships with some institutions than NEASC. ATS will keep NEASC fully informed about such activities, however, and NEASC will be free to participate in any of these as may seem appropriate. In instances where new degree programs clearly constitute "substantive change" as NEASC defines the term, both agencies will be fully involved in the additional evaluation activities such changes make necessary.

II. PATTERNS OF COOPERATION FOR JOINT EVALUATIONS

Either accrediting agency may serve as the coordinating or the cooperating agency for a joint evaluation, according to the following plan:

1) When an independent seminary is to be evaluated or reevaluated, ATS will coordinate the visit, appoint the team chairperson, and supply the evaluation team, with NEASC naming one or two members to it.
2) When a university with a divinity school as an integral component or a seminary attached to a larger liberal arts college is evaluated, NEASC will coordinate the visit, appoint the chairperson, and supply the team, with ATS adding one or two specialists to the team.
3) When a seminary and a college exist as approximately equal institutions in reasonable proximity to each other (e.g., a Roman Catholic minor seminary and theologate), either ATS or NEASC will coordinate the visit and field the team, acording to the pattern agreed upon by all parties concerned.

III. INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY AND JOINT EVALUATION

Both accrediting agencies agree to the use of a common self-study document in a joint evaluation. The guidelines for self-study supplied by each are sufficiently complementary to permit an institution to produce a document ade-

quately analyzing its strengths and weaknesses. When it seems necessary, supplementary materials addressed to specific concerns of either accrediting agency may be appended.

Experience to date with joint evaluations suggests that the topical approach to self-study described in NEASC literature is not well-suited to a joint evaluation visit, and institutions are urged to use a more comprehensive approach in such instances.

IV. THE EVALUATION REPORT IN JOINT EVALUATION

Normally, a single evaluation report to the institution will be prepared by the team chairperson, with copies to both ATS and NEASC. Sections of this report (or appendices to it) may, when necessary, speak directly to specific concerns of either of the accrediting agencies.

When ATS is the coordinating agency and fields the evaluation teams, one of the team members named by NEASC will prepare a two-page summary of the team report for use in NEASC's reporting processes. This summary shall include a specific recommendation for accreditation action by the NEASC Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.

V. COMMISSION ACTION FOLLOWING JOINT EVALUATION

The accreditation action of the Commission which meets first after a joint evaluation visit will be reported to the other Commission, for its information only. As noted above, each Commission will make its own decision regarding accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation. In instances involving serious divergences between the accreditation actions recommended to the two Commissions, full inter-staff discussion will precede the meeting of either group.

As each Commission is free to make its own recommendation regarding accreditation action, so it is free to require its normal follow-up activities during the period for which accreditation is granted or renewed, as well as reports and summaries that are part of regular reporting procedures.

VI. FEES FOR JOINT EVALUATION

Since experimentation with joint evaluation is designed chiefly to save an institution's time, energy, and money in the evaluation process, modifications in fees are appropriate only in that process. The normal annual dues for membership in each association are in no way changed, for example, since an institution will be a full member of each group.

When ATS serves as the coordinating agency, it will follow its usual procedure of charging the institution a set fee plus related expenses of the ATS-appointed evaluators. Added to these charges will be the expenses of NEASC evaluators.

When NEASC is the coordinating agency, it will charge its usual basic fee, plus the related expenses of team members, including the ATS visitors.

Only one billing to an institution will be made, by the coordinating agency which fields the joint team. This bill will include all expenses for both accrediting agencies.

MECHANISMS FOR EXCHANGING INFORMATION AND SCHEDULING JOINT SITE VISITS

The American Home Economics Association/Foundation for Interior Design Education Research and the American Dietetic Association

A. Mechanism for exchange of information regarding the site visit

Permission to share the following information regarding programs will be requested from each agency Board:

1. programs which have indicated intent to begin the process of seeking accreditation
2. programs to be visited during the next year
3. positive program decision in new program/units

Such sharing of information would be considered confidential.

B. Mechanism for scheduling joint site visits

In discussing joint site visits, it was determined that there were two types, cooperative joint visits in which fewer visitors representing each agency would be present and thus each agency would rely on the representatives of other agencies for gathering part of the information, or concurrent site visits, in which two or more site visits were scheduled simultaneously with minimal interaction during the site visit.

The joint committee felt that development of the first type of cooperative visit would be long-term and after initial concurrent visits had taken place. At this time, the committee felt that it would limit itself in the next year to trying to formulate procedures to schedule concurrent site visits.

JOINT EVALUATION TEAM VISITS

Council on Education for Public Health and the Accrediting for Health Services Administration Commission on Education

The ACHESA/CEPH Collaborative Task Force developed a model schedule for a joint visit and conducted two of them in 1978, one with the University of Washington in April and another in November with Columbia University in New York.

Institutional personnel at both institutions were virtually unanimous in their positive reactions to the joint visits. Moreover, it appeared that the broader the scope of responsibility, the more enthusiastic was the interest in agency collaboration. Both teams received copies of each other's self-study and a joint exit interview was attended by both teams.

Columbia University officials saw four major advantages accruing from a joint visit;

Coordination with internal reviews;
Economic utilization of institutional resources;
The possibility of broadening the scope of accreditation; and
The facilitating effects of internal cohensiveness.

Guidelines on Interagency Cooperation in Accreditation

Prepared by the
Task Force on Interagency Cooperation
and
Approved by the COPA Board
October 7, 1980

Basic principles:

Cooperation among accrediting agencies may occur in many areas and may take a variety of forms. The programmatic accrediting agencies provide the institutional accrediting agencies with standards of excellence in the specialized fields and assistance in evaluating them. The institutional accrediting agencies in turn provide the programmatic acrediting agencies with assistance in an appraisal of the institution, especially institutional control and management. Institutional accrediting agencies, programmatic accrediting agencies, and institutions should work closely together in the total accrediting process.

It is the intent of this Task Force to identify a range of opportunities for cooperative endeavors, rather than to propose a single structure for cooperation. There is agreement that cooperation is a desirable goal and that sincere, continuing effort toward cooperation is essential if accreditation's position as a positive force is to be enhanced in advancing quality education.

Toward this end, the following principles are set forth:

1. Facilitating cooperation between and among institutional and programmatic accrediting agencies should be an objective of COPA, the accrediting agencies, and the institutions served by them.
2. Consistent with the concept of voluntary accreditation, each institution of postsecondary education should decide for itself whether to seek accreditation by any appropriate agency or combination of agencies.
3. Institutions desiring coordinated accrediting activities, particularly among agencies accrediting programs located within the same academic administrative unit (*i.e.*, a School of Professional Studies), should be offered every possible assistance and cooperation.
4. Coordination begins with the designation of responsibility within the institution for liaison with the various accrediting agencies.
5. To be successful, coordination requires advance planning by both the institution and the accrediting agency or agencies involved.
6. Representatives of each accrediting agency will be responsible to their parent agency for investigation and reporting activities carried out as part of the accrediting cycle.

Definitions and cooperative arrangements:

For the purpose of distinguishing among institutional and programmatic agencies, the following operational definitions are presented:

1. *An institutional (general) accrediting agency* accredits an institution as a whole and therefore includes all areas, activities, and programs of the institution. Normally, institutional accreditation testifies to: (a) the appropriateness of the objectives of the institution; (b) the adequacy of its organization, program, and resources, both material and human, when viewed against its objectives and generally accepted accrediting standards; and (c) evidence of the accomplishment of institutional objectives in reasonable measure. Moreover, the criteria of eligibility provide that degree programs, however specialized must rest upon a base of liberal or general studies required by all or most students. However, accreditation of the institution as a whole is not, and should not be interpreted as being, equivalent to specialized accreditation of a part or program of the institution and should not be represented as such.
2. *Programmatic (specialized) accrediting agencies* accredit program(s) within the total institution (or in the case of single purpose institutions, may accredit the institution as a whole). The focus of specialized accreditation is on the effectiveness with which the program meets its objectives and those of the institution, and the accrediting standards for quality education. Normally, specialized accreditation reviews the relationship of the program to the larger unit, the adequacy of the organization and resources for program maintenance and development, and evidence of accomplishment of programmatic objectives. However, specialized accreditation does not purport to make judgments on the institution as a whole (except in some cases of single-purpose institutions).

The Study of Interagency Cooperation, undertaken by the Task Force, documented cooperative arrangements which have developed among accrediting agencies. The following relationships were identified:

1. Institutional and institutional accrediting agencies, including:
   - ☐ Regional and regional
   - ☐ Regional and national
   - ☐ National and national
   - ☐ Regional or national and programmatic (functioning as an institutional)
2. Institutional and programmatic
3. Programmatic and programmatic

Each accrediting agency functioned in accordance with its own purpose and recognized scope of activity. The unique contribution of both institutional and programmatic accrediting to the total evaluative process was recognized, as were the possible benefits accruing to the institution, the program, and the agencies from the coordinated effort.

Guidelines for cooperation:

1. *Institutional role:*
   The institution should assume a leadership role in suggesting how cooperating accrediting agencies can best work together to provide optimum service to the institution.
2. *Need for written agreements:*
   Written agreements should be established among accrediting agencies that propose to cooperate. In initial form these may be relatively simple and deal primarily with matters of principle, becoming more specific as the cooperating agencies resolve procedural differences through experience. Sharing of the written agreement with all participants in the accrediting process will reduce potential misunderstandings and conflicts.
3. *Designation of accrediting responsibility:*
   a. Between two or more institutional accrediting agencies
      ☐ An institution with operations that cross regional boundaries must be prepared to deal with all of the regional accrediting agencies involved; however, the regional accrediting agency for the parent campus normally will serve as the coordinating agency.
      ☐ A specialized institution for which there is a national specialized institutional accrediting agency (such as American Association of Bible Colleges, Association of Independent Colleges and Schools, National Association of Trade and Technical Schools, National Home Study Council) is encouraged to deal with the appropriate specialized agency. If the institution desires to seek only regional accreditation, the institution should so inform the specialized agency.
      ☐ A specialized institution seeking accreditation from two or more national, specialized accrediting agencies must determine what constitutes its predominant emphasis (specialization), and that determination will identify the appropriate coordinating agency.
      ☐ A specialized institution for which there is a programmatic accrediting agency that accredits free-standing specialized institutions (such as American Bar Association, Association of Theological Schools, National Association of Schools of Music, etc.) is encouraged to deal with the appropriate programmatic agency. If the institution desires to seek accreditation from an institutional accrediting agency as well, the programmatic agency would serve as the coordinating agency. If the institution desires to seek only institutional accreditation, the institution should so inform the programmatic agency.
   b. Between institutional and programmatic accrediting agencies
      ☐ When a multi-purpose institution seeks a coordinated accreditation process involving both an institutional accrediting agency and one or more programmatic accrediting agencies, the institutional accrediting agency will serve as the coordinating agency. In instances where there are

one or more clusters of related programmatic agencies, there should be a coordinating agency for each cluster which in turn would work with the institutional accrediting agency.

☐ When external coordination is not possible, an institution should seek accreditation for an academic administrative unit or sub-unit within the institution after it has achieved appropriate accreditation of the more inclusive entity (total institution, college school, division, department, program—in that order).

c. Between programmatic accrediting agencies

☐ When an institution seeks accreditation involving two or more programmatic accrediting agencies (located within the same or in different academic administrative units), the chief administrative officer of the institution, with mutual agreement and consent of the involved accrediting agencies, shall designate the coordinating agency, with responsibility normally going to the agency representing the program with the largest enrollment. This agency will coordinate the accrediting activities (joint and or autonomous) consistent with the established guidelines.

4. *Accreditation standards:*

The accreditation standards of the participating accrediting agencies (institutional and programmatic) shall apply during the review. Team members should be aware of the range of standards being utilized. Procedures followed during the visit and the subsequent reporting phase must reflect the standards as required by each agency. In instances where standards may overlap or vary, the visit and the report must incorporate data relevant to the specific agencies.

5. *Contacts with institutions:*

Accrediting agencies which utilize staff pre-visits should arrange a joint institutional visit to negotiate details of the cooperative accrediting process. Where all parties are not involved in a pre-visit, participating agencies will contact the institution individually regarding the self-study, the visit, and other expectations. However, these contacts must be carefully coordinated to eliminate conflicting instructions regarding the joint accrediting process. Participating institutions should be flexible in establishing visitation dates.

6. *Self-study alternatives:*

When the institution, or an administrative unit within an institution, is seeking accreditation from more than one agency, the self-study may take a variety of forms, including the following:

(a) Common self-study, (b) Core self-study, with varying supplemental analyses, (c) Separate self-studies, with certain common elements, (d) A non-traditional alternative.

Institutions may wish to prepare single reporting documents designed to meet all requirements of each agency. The nature and format of the self-study

document should be negotiated at the time a joint accrediting cycle is initiated. Where the team will function as a unit (such as an institutional agency and programmatic agency visiting a single-purpose institution), a common self-study is indicated. In multi-purpose institutions, joint visits may be concurrent rather than coordinated. In the consultative stages establishing the accrediting process, a procedure for responding adequately to the data needs of all the accrediting agencies should be negotiated.

7. *Visiting team and on-site visit:*

   Written agreements should include: the team's composition; the complementary skills required and the responsibility for their selection; designation of the chairman (who will normally be from the coordinating agency); procedures to be followed during the visit; the format of the written report; the process of its development; the nature of recommendations; and their reporting to the institution.

   Cooperating agencies are encouraged to share data about potential site visitors, forming common pools of names where possible or exchanging information in specific situations. All site visitors may be selected from the common pool by the coordinating agency, or the cooperating agencies may determine criteria (size of team, areas of competency desired, background experience related to institution to be visited, etc.) and specify the number of team members to be selected by each cooperating agency. Where there are only two cooperating agencies, co-chairmen may be designated by each agency. The chairman (co-chairmen) is responsible for making logistical arrangements.

   A specialized accrediting agency can add a valuable dimension by working cooperatively with an appropriate institutional accrediting agency in the selection of a generalist to serve on the team. Where an institutional accrediting agency needs certain expertise on a team, the appropriate specialized accrediting agency can provide assistance. In developing cooperative team arrangements, however, the integrity of the review process must be preserved. Generalists cannot effectively replace specialists, or **vice versa**, and a large team representing several accrediting agencies may not be as effective as coordinated multiple teams.

8. *Commission action:*

   Accrediting decisions on reports are made in accordance with the policies established by the participating agencies. Where a common team report is filed, each accrediting commission should receive a copy. Where no common report is feasible, each accrediting commission takes action on the report prepared by its team representatives. Each commission should take such action as its standards require and as supported by the report data. Accrediting [illegible]s by any commission (institutional or programmatic) should be shared with participating accrediting agencies.

9. *Fees and costs:*

   Because the costs of an accrediting cycle could be reduced through coordination among accrediting agencies, fees and costs should be determined between

and among accrediting agencies prior to the accrediting process. The institution is responsible for paying the usual or reduced fees to each agency to cover any cost of general agency services related to the accrediting cycle. Direct costs of a site visit can be reduced through such cooperative arrangements as a joint team, and therefore the fee to the institution can be proportionately reduced. In instances where a cooperating agency does not assess a fee to the institution, its proportionate costs will have to be determined and that agency would honor its share. Each agency should handle its own billing.

It should be noted that one of the most significant reductions in the cost burden to the institution can result from a combined self-study, reporting system, etc.

Suggested Readings

"Accrediting Agency Approaches to Academic Program Evaluation" by Kenneth E. Young and Charles M. Chambers, **New Directions for Institutional Research, 27, 1980.**

A Study of Interagency Cooperation in Accreditation Activity by Marie N. Carver and Fred F. Harcleroad, Task Force Report on Interagency Cooperation, October 1977.

Multiple Accreditation Relationships of Postsecondary Institutions in the United States by H. R. Kells and Richard M. Parrish, COPA, June 1979.

Opinions About Accreditation and Interagency Cooperation, a nationwide survey by Fred L. Pigge, COPA, July 1979.

Acknowledgments

The guidelines and models presented here represent three years of effort by dedicated members of the academic and accrediting communities. Two Task Forces undertook two nationwide surveys and armed with a battery of relevant literature, synthesized and evaluated reports from seven COPA groups, documentation from several accrediting groups, and products of national research organizations.

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